

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 01696 171028Z

21

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 OMB-01 AID-20 SAB-01 SAM-01 NIC-01 SCCT-02 IO-14

ACDA-19 CCO-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 DRC-01

/162 W

----- 103830

O R 170915Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1251

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 1696

NO FOREIGN DISSEM

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, MARR, EG, IS, SY

SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST MILITARY POSTURES

REF: A. STATE 177005; B. DAMASCUS 1695

WITH FURTHER REFERENCE TO INFORMATION PARA 2 REFTL

(A) THAT CLANDESTINE SOURCES "REPORT SYRIA PUT ARMY ON
ALERT," RELIABLE EMBASSY CONTACT INFORMED ME LAST NIGHT
(AUGUST 16) ONLY SYRIAN MILITARY UNIT PRESENTLY ON

SECRET

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ALERT IS THE "DEFENSE REGIMENT" UNDER THE COMMAND OF

RIFAT ASAD, PRESIDENT ASAD'S BORTHER. THIS UNIT, STATIONED IN AND AROUND DAMASCUS AND CONSISTING OF APPROXIMATELY 30,000 MEN IS AUTOMATICALLY PUT ON ALERT WHEN PRESIDENT IS OUT OF THE COUNTRY WHICH HE WAS BETWEEN AUGUST 14 AND 17 ON OFFICIAL VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA. SAME EMBASSY SOURCE INDICATED THAT SYRIAN ARMY WAS PUT ON ALERT FOR BETWEEN 24 TO 48 HOURS ON JULY 15 AT BEGINNING OF THE CYPRUS CRISIS. PRESIDENT ASAD WAS SCHEDULED AT THAT TIME TO VISIT YUGOSLAVIA AND SUBSEQUENTLY CANCELED HIS VISIT BECAUSE OF SAME CRISIS. SAME SOURCE SAYS SYRIAN ARMY IS NOT RPT NOT PRESENTLY ON ALERT. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, HE ADDED THAT UNTIL CYPRUS CRISIS SYRIAN ARMY WAS DEMOBILIZING SOME OF ITS PERSONNEL. WHEN THE ARMY WAS PUT ON ALERT FOR CYPRUS CRISIS DEMOBILIZATION WAS STOPPED. MORE RECENTLY, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF "ISRAELI WAR THREATS" SYRIAN ARMY IS NOW CALLING BACK INTO SERVICE SOME OF THOSE MEN RECENTLY DEMOBILIZED.

SCOTES

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

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